

The Agrarians Deny a Leader

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THE publication in 1930 of the symposium *I'll Take My Stand*, by Twelve Southerners, was the firing on Fort Sumter of a new civil war. There had been previous attacks on the industrial order, triumphant in America since the Northern victory of 1865, by discontented individualists, and by some of the Southern Agrarians who contributed to the symposium. But not before the volume with the defiant title appeared was it possible to know fully what the programme of the new Southern Agrarians was; and not before it appeared was the country as a whole aware of the strength of the forces of the new rebellion.

Since 1930 the programme of the Southern Agrarians (if such their "Statement of Principles" may be called) has become widely known, and—thanks considerably to the somewhat fortuitous circumstances of nation-wide and lasting economic depression, which has raised serious questions affecting the industrial capitalistic society—also fairly widely approved. However, in spite of the fact that the authors of the book made clear that their programme was not one for the South only, and in spite of the fact that their subsequent explanations of their position have appeared chiefly in Northern magazines, such as *The Hound and Horn*, *THE AMERICAN REVIEW*, and *The New Republic*, it has been generally assumed that the new agrarian protest against capitalistic industrialism was not merely an assertion of belief in the order of the

Old South, but a gesture of reverence and homage to the Old South, to its gods, its heroes, its *lares* and *penates*.

That such is not the case, Mr. Allen Tate's biography of Jefferson Davis should have made clear—though there is considerable doubt as to whether Jefferson Davis has ever been one of the true gods of the Old South, or was before the martyrdom imposed by the North. But that the Agrarians feel no compulsion of devotion to the memory of Southerners generally cherished has been made most clear in recent essays by two contributors to *I'll Take My Stand*, on Sidney Lanier.

Since Sidney Lanier himself championed agrarianism, and might properly be considered a precursor of the New Agrarians, his belittlement by Mr. Allen Tate and Mr. Robert Penn Warren is strange and ungrateful, but not un instructive. If we examine the charges made by them against Lanier, and the grounds for them, we shall learn a good deal about the soundness of agrarian literary criticism, and so be able to view in a fresh light agrarian criticism of economic systems. That Lanier is a poet greatly beloved throughout the South, and that the attacks by Mr. Tate (in *The New Republic*, August 30, 1933) and by Mr. Warren (in *THE AMERICAN REVIEW*, November, 1933) were made almost at the moment when the United Daughters of the Confederacy, assembled in convention in Baltimore, were hearing addresses on Lanier's living name and increasing fame, and making plans to secure his election to the New York University Hall of Fame, is a coincidence, but not significant. The point I wish to emphasize here

is not that the New Agrarians—as represented by Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren—can be guilty of extreme “disloyalty” to the Old South, and its heroes, but that they can misread clear statements and misinterpret to suit their ends.

Mr. Tate, calling Lanier “A Southern Romantic”, and Mr. Warren, characterizing him as “The Blind Poet”, made charges against Lanier so similar that they may, and surely without incurring the wrath of either essayist, be combined for listing here. They are:

(1) That Lanier made a mistaken effort to “transform poetry into a branch of music”.

(2) That “his poetry had little to say to his century in substance or in technique”, being a “blurring of images in a random kind of verbiage”, lacking “precision of statement”, and “sprinkled . . . with meaningless didacticism”.

(3) That “as he failed to present one clear image in his verse, so he failed to see through a single leading idea of his age. . . . [He] identified with ‘truth’ those political notions, those public movements, those theories of art, which promised success to his career”.

(4) That his nationalism was a nationalism of Trade, the nationalism, that is, of the victorious North—in spite of his protests against the domination of Trade in “The Symphony” and elsewhere.

(5) That “he believed that the searing blast of art should be tempered to the shorn and public lamb; that he must defer to the public taste, consciously, in order better at some later time to instruct it”.

(6) That he accepted too readily and applauded too enthusiastically the nationalism, the science, the art, and the discoveries (photography, phonography,

et cetera) of his own day—especially “the delusion that the function of applied science is to make men at home in nature”.

(7) That he was himself “the final product of all that was dangerous in Romanticism: his theory of personality, his delusion of prophecy, his aesthetic premise, his uninformed admiration of science, his nationalism, his passion for synthesis, his theory of progress”.

(8) That he “was a prophet foretelling only the blessings of our own age . . . a nineteenth-century leader who helped to make us what we are today”.

That these charges fall into two groups is apparent. Lanier’s defects as listed by Messrs. Tate and Warren are aesthetic and philosophic—faults of taste and of artistic practice, and failures of understanding and of intelligent thinking. With the criticism of Lanier’s aesthetic theories and practice we can have little or nothing to do here, because of lack of space and because our examination of Lanier, in connection with the agrarian programme, is not primarily an examination for aesthetic purposes. It is with the charge that Lanier was blind to the defects of his age, and that instead of understanding and championing a Southern way of life (that of the Agrarians!) he flattered Northern industrialism and celebrated the Northern way, that we are here most concerned.

It may, however, be remarked that it is unfair to accuse Lanier of tempering “the searing blast of art . . . to the shorn and public lamb”. Messrs. Tate and Warren are fortunate in living in an era in which a Southern literary artist may hope—largely as a result of the South’s previous yielding to the forces of

Northern industrialism—to make a living by his pen, and to secure publication of poems, books, and essays directed even against the existing order. One has only to study a few issues of *The Nation* of the period of Lanier's literary career (1874-1881) to realize that Lanier was compelled by necessity to "defer to public taste, consciously", in order not merely that he might "at some later time . . . instruct it" but that he might keep his body and soul together until that later time (which he failed, however, in doing). If that he did so is not to his credit, it is certainly not, from any reasonable point of view, to his shame.

Some understanding of his sufferings—his physical suffering, caused by actual want—Lanier gives in his posthumous and not too allegorical poem, "June Dreams, in January", and again in that neglected juvenile, "The Hard Times in Elfland", which with its allegory of Santa Claus financially ruined by his investment in watered stock of the Celestial Railway Company seems today more contemporary than any other of Lanier's poems. His desire to speak out boldly in criticism of his times, if not apparent in such poems as "Corn" and "The Symphony", is certainly manifest in the but lately republished commencement address delivered in Americus, Georgia, in 1869, and in a poem, "Remonstrance", publication of which Lanier tried hard but unsuccessfully to secure. Much of the work Lanier did see published, and most of his work that has been published since his death, is mere literary hack-work. As such it is not often surprisingly good, but it is often—for a product of the "Brown Decades"—surprisingly outspoken, and denunciatory.

To call Lanier's nationalism a left-handed accept-

ance of Northern industrialism is to label him as something of a Benedict Arnold of the Southern way of life. Mr. Tate explains his reference to Lanier's "flattery" of the industrial capitalism of the North thus: "The Psalm of the West' is praise of 'nationalism', *argal* of Northern sectionalism, *argal* of industrialism. I hope this is not too esoteric in its logic."

Esoteric it is, however. Lanier, who had fought through the war as a Confederate soldier until November, 1864, when he passed into a Northern prison, and from whom at his death the Civil War was but one year more remote than the World War is from us today, did not see that the triumph of the North meant the triumph of industrialism, and could not have seen it. He was no prophet, as his attempts at prophecy (as in his discussion of the "etherialization" which he thought was taking place in all orders of social activity) prove. It is an easy thing in 1934 to say what the Northern victory in 1865 brought about in the succeeding sixty-nine years, but it would have been remarkable if anyone dying in 1881 could have foretold the course of industrial capitalism for the next fifty-three years (especially the bond-servant it was to make of science) and the depression that began in 1929, in a land of plenty.

The Northern victory to Lanier meant the shattering of his dream that the new (agrarian!) Confederacy was to inaugurate an era of artistic and intellectual splendour, rivalling that of the Athens of Pericles. It meant the loss of health, of opportunities for intellectual advancement, and of any chance of living the peaceful, ordered life the New Agrarians celebrate. It meant a revelation of political chicanery,

dishonesty, and corruption that no one who did not live through the period can well appreciate, in spite of the graphic picture of the era drawn by Mr. Claude Bowers and in spite of the recent revelations before the Senate committee on banking. It meant disillusionment that was to make some Southerners expatriates in Brazil, Honduras, France, and England; others—like Burton Harrison, President Davis's secretary—converts to the Northern order; and still others "die-hards", "unreconstructed rebels", Daughters of the Confederacy, and Southern agrarians.

Lanier however neither sought refuge in another land nor comfort in any adopted attitude. He accepted defeat, admitted it, and proceeded to forget it, in every way that was possible but also noble and dignified, and that he did so seems to me greatly to his credit. He did not embrace a nationalism that was really nothing more than Northern sectionalism, but he tried to be a reconciling influence between North and South and to recover, for himself and for those who would hear him, the old ideals of nationalism known to Washington and Jefferson and Adams. Though one hesitates to use the figure, because of the implication of "spread-eagleism" (which Lanier specifically deplored), his nationalism is the nationalism of those fine cabinet-makers of the early Republic who made of even the Federal bird itself a beautiful decorative design. If, in his Centennial Cantata and "The Psalm of the West", Lanier emphasized episodes from New England colonial history rather than from the colonial history of Virginia, it was because, for reasons that held in Lanier's day as well as later, those episodes were the more familiar, and

therefore the more useful for his purpose; but also because—and may a Southerner not say it without being accused of disloyalty to the South?—the settlement of New England possessed a spiritual significance that the settlement of Virginia (which alone antedated it) lacked. In “The Psalm of the West” the best passages, poetically, are those which ascribe to Columbus emotions—dreams for the land of his discovery—which Columbus surely never felt. It was no thought of the United States under the presidency of Grant that inspired Lanier but a vision of America as a land of promise still, in spite of Civil War, and Reconstruction, and Civil Rights Bills, and of corruption that touched the White House.

And if, in that Centennial Ode (for “The Psalm of the West” was commissioned for publication in *Lippincott’s Magazine* for July, 1876) Lanier describes the Civil War “unrealistically”, as Mr. Warren says, as a chivalrous joust between two knights, Heart (the South) and Brain (the North), he was in doing that being a little more clear than Mr. Warren is willing to admit. In his 1869 commencement address Lanier had stated:

Let us not forget . . . to accept and digest the unpalatable truth that we, here in the South, are among the crudest theorizers in the world. We put together too many unsubstantial hypotheses. Day after day our public journals are filled with letters whose conclusions rest neither on logic nor on fact. I fear we are inordinately fond of predicting, of supposing, of prophesying. . . . Let us learn to delay our conclusions until we have gathered together many facts, until we have taken all large and many-sided views, and above all until we have

actually tried them. . . . Do not announce your projects before they are born; do not bury them before they are dead. Think, labour, wait.

What Lanier said under guise of the allegory of Heart and Brain (written possibly as early as 1862, and merely re-used in 1876) was true then as it is now. A cultured Southern lady who knew Lanier, a loyal daughter of the "Old South", wrote recently in reference to the removal of a young Northerner—Sidney Lanier's grandson!—to the South, to make his home there: "He will not be disappointed if he comes prepared to find less *head* but perhaps more *heart* here than in New England." She was surprised later, upon rereading "The Psalm of the West", to find that Lanier himself had expressed so clearly what she meant. Lanier's statement of a truth is courteous, and generous. That it is "unrealistic" as an account of the Civil War is beside the point: a realistic description would have been out of place in a centennial ode as a matter of taste and of tact. Moreover, it is usually the case that those who suffer most are the least eloquently descriptive of their sufferings. Though Lanier left realistic enough accounts of warfare and imprisonment in *Tiger Lilies*, the realistic classic on the Civil War is *The Red Badge of Courage*, by Stephen Crane, who was born in 1871.

When it came to fighting a battle in behalf of a cause that was, for Lanier as for us, a living cause and not one already lost, he too could be brutally frank and realistic, even to the extent of pointing out that economic want is a prime but inexcusable cause of female prostitution. The late Vernon Louis Parrington observed that Lanier was "the first of our

poets to cry out against [industrialism] as a deadly blight on life and civilization"; and Mr. Henry Steele Commager has recently called Lanier's poem "The Symphony" "a savage indictment of industrialism". It is that, in spite of the defects of vocabulary, and of imagery, which date the poem as Victorian. He who could write

Does business mean, *Die, you—live, I?*
 Then "Trade is trade" but sings a lie:
 'Tis only war grown miserly.
 If business is battle, name it so:
 War-crimes less will shame it so:
 And widows less will blame it so.

was not one ever to flatter industrialism, even indirectly, or by implication. And Lanier's life-long desire, we should remember, was to write a long poem on "The Jacquerie", the savage uprising of the peasants in fourteenth-century France. It was Trade, as he explained in a letter, "that hatched the Jacquerie", as well as John Brown. "Trade killed Chivalry, and now sits in the throne."

Lanier distrusted industrialism, because he hated social injustice, and he saw that capitalistic industrialism produced it. If Lanier accepted science, hailed excitedly the new scientific discoveries of his age, and the application of science to inventions that should make living more agreeable instead of more sordid and unendurable (as Mr. Andrew Nelson Lytle has convincingly demonstrated in his contribution to *I'll Take My Stand*), it was because Lanier, even in the 870's, had faith enough to believe that science, which seemed a divine gift, could not be used for man's

debasement. He did not foresee that the invention of the mazda bulb would produce, ultimately, Samuel Insull, the domestic suffering caused by the collapse of Mid-West Utilities, and a diplomatic incident involving the United States and Greece. It is easy to say in 1934 that most of the "entertainment" that comes over the radio is vile, but the commercialization of radio was held by many thoughtful people, ten years ago, to mark the beginning of a new era of public enlightenment and increased musical appreciation. Mr. Warren's deprecation of Lanier's appreciation of photography cannot be taken seriously. There is nothing in art lovelier than some of the non-journalistic photography of the present day.

Though no farmer, Lanier had acquired—probably breathed it in with the Southern air of Macon—a knowledge of practical agriculture, and he had from first to last a deep concern for it. The passage from the 1869 commencement address quoted above is specifically in reference to agriculture, though I omitted in quoting the specialized reference because it is plain that Lanier was merely using a special example to illustrate a general truth. Sentences omitted above are: "Experiment as much as you can. Try this and that fertilizer; plant an acre in this grain, an acre in that cotton, an acre in the other vine. . . ."

His little-known but effective early dialect poems are—with a single exception—all descriptive of farmers, and are pleas in behalf of diversification of crops. They are in a sense a poetic counterpart of the editorials of Mr. Joseph Clisby, editor of the *Macon Telegraph and Messenger* (referred to by name in one of the poems), urging the planting of more corn

and less cotton, and—as such—propaganda. Lanier's vision of a South economically ruined by over-production of cotton but redeemed by the production of corn (there was not in 1874 as now a corn surplus as well) is expressed in "Corn", a poem indigenous to a Georgia corn-field.

But the agrarian *ideal* is not one of one-crop agriculture. "Corn" suggests an immediate solution for a present evil; it is not a programme for a continuous social development. Proof that Lanier was a wise agrarian must be sought elsewhere. I find it in the very essay, "The New South", that Mr. Tate seems to think so little of. And if I draw entirely from this essay the evidence of Lanier's intelligent agrarianism and ignore possibly contradictory evidence in other essays, such as that called "Retrospects and Prospects", written thirteen years before, it is because it seems to me only fair to accept Lanier's last written and published testament on the South as the testament he meant to leave to us, voiding all others.

The New South, Lanier was careful to state, meant—in distinction from the old—small farming, the development of which "during the last twenty years becomes the notable circumstance of the period". If successful small farming, with each farm thoroughly self-sustaining, is not the agrarian ideal at its purest and best, as stated even in the symposium *I'll Take My Stand*, I know not how to label it.

Indeed [Lanier wrote] one has only to recall how the connection between marriage and the price of corn is but a crude and partial statement of the intimate relation between politics, social life, morality, art, on the one hand, and the bread-giver earth on the other; one has

only to remember that . . . whatever crop we hope to reap in the future—whether it be a crop of poems, . . . of constitutional safeguards, of virtuous behaviors, . . . —we have got to bring it out of the ground with palpable ploughs and with plain farmer's forethought; in order to see that a vital revolution in the farming economy of the South . . . is the one substantial fact upon which a really new South can be predicated.

It is interesting, too, that Lanier viewed with alarm the large-scale farming of the Northwest—industrialized farming—which even the New Agrarians must feel is agrarianism betrayed and corrupted. But his fear was based on possibilities, not on actualities: "The evils just now alleged of large farming in the West were necessarily in the way of prophecy," he wrote at the conclusion of his discussion; and Time has in this at least proved his prophecy not a matter of "delusion". There is an interesting parallelism between Lanier's statement that "large farming is not farming at all. It is mining for wheat", and Mr. Lytle's pertinent remark that "a farm is not a place to grow wealthy; it is a place to grow corn".

Indeed, Lanier's essay on the New South would not be out of place in the Agrarian symposium. Certainly it is the ideal of the Agrarians that he expresses in his statement that "on the large farm [with its seasonal over-turn of labour] is no abiding-place; the labourer must move on; life cannot stand still, to settle and clarify". *Settle and clarify!* It is the settled and clarified life, surely, that Mr. Stark Young praises as the aristocratic; and it is the Southern way of life, whether it be agrarian or industrial.

It is something I still fail, after considerable effort,

to understand that Mr. Allen Tate could ever once have read "The New South" and stated: "Having convinced himself [in this essay] that the South would become . . . a region of securely rooted small farmers, [Lanier] was at liberty to misunderstand the social and economic significance of the Civil War, and to flatter the industrial capitalism of the North in . . . '[The] Psalm of the West'." The poem, of course, antedates the essay by four years, though Mr. Tate ignores that. He ignores also, and more regrettably, that in the essay Lanier characterizes large farming as manufacturing, points out the evils of it, and expresses his fine "indignation" against it.

Mr. Warren finds inconsistency in Lanier's protest against the domination of Trade and the fact that "he once found it in his heart to approve big corporations because they were 'needed'". What Lanier actually wrote was: "Our republic vitally needs the corporation for the mighty works which only the corporation can do, while it as vitally needs the small farmer for the pure substance of individual and self-reliant manhood which he digs out of the ground, and which, the experience of all peoples would seem to show, must primarily come that way and no other." In their prefatory "Statement of Principles" the contributors to *I'll Take My Stand* declare:

An agrarian society is hardly one that has no use at all for industries. . . . An agrarian society is one in which agriculture is the leading vocation . . . that becomes the model to which the other forms approach as well as they may. . . . An agrarian régime will be secured readily enough where the superfluous industries are not allowed to rise against it.

If any other point needs to be laboured to prove Lanier a good agrarian, who should be accepted as such by the apostolic twelve, it is the point that Lanier was sectional, that he saluted proudly the Southern way of life, refused to exchange it for any other way, and rejoiced in his sectionalism. And that, I think, may be proved from his writings and by accounts of his personality. It is not too much to say that by his dignified bearing and his courteous ways, and by the irresistible appeal of his "shining presence" (to quote Lowell's description) he made those Northerners who came to know him think appreciatively of the section that produced him. Long after he was gone, in speaking of him they referred to him always as "the charming Southerner".

In matters touching national problems and affairs, Lanier refused to be sectional (in the derogatory sense of the word) and he deplored, consistently enough, the tendency of editors and critics, Southern as well as Northern, to judge his work, his art, as Southern, sectional work, to be praised or condemned in respect to sectional bias. But Lanier loved the South. He was proud that he was a Southerner. He rejoiced that he was chosen to write the Centennial Cantata "as representative of our dear South". He never lost touch with the South, and specifically with Georgia, whose hills, rivers and marshes he described in his best and best-known poems. Moreover, the essay "The New South" is one-half discussion of large farming and its attendant evils, and one-half enthusiastic report on the beneficent results of fifteen years of small farming in Georgia, with the briefest mention of one other Southern state, Mississippi. It ends with a lyrical ac-

count of life in "this gracious land", "that ample stretch of generous soil, where the Appalachian ruggednesses calm themselves into pleasant hills before dying quite away into the sea-board levels", that recalls forcibly an earlier if less effective account of this same land.

The earlier account is to be found in an uncollected and practically unknown poem, "The Homestead", which Lanier published in 1871 (while he was still reading law, and before his literary, his public career, had yet really begun) in a paper called, happily enough, *The Southern Farm and Home*. In this poem the State of Georgia speaks, announcing fundamental principles of social living of which New Agrarians and New Dealers alike must approve.

I will no man shall homeless be,
I will no weeping wife shall flee
From shadow of her own roof-tree
Forth driven by hard neighbor.

I know the large sweet sanctities
That grow in homes, and unto these
I add the might of my decrees
To make the home-strength stronger;

To foster and confirm the place
Where Birth hath glory, Life hath grace
And Death hath smiles upon his face
When Life hath grace no longer.

Instructions are then given for the planting of various fruits, grains, vines, and vegetables, because

Lean Hunger starves with plenteous fright;
Want dies, death-stricken with delight;

And Crime slinks back into his night;
Where Plenty rides proud prancing.

That the ideas of the poem are superior to the expression is of course not to be gainsaid.

For Southern agrarians, for even two of them, to attack Lanier as a poet (and by poet I do not here mean versifier but, in Lanier's own conception of the poet's function, leader of men) is one of the curious, unexpected things that happen to disturb one's sense of a settled and clarified order. Dr. William S. Knickerbocker, of Sewanee, writing some several months before either Mr. Tate or Mr. Warren published his attack on Lanier, stated that Lanier's

agrarian plea for the diversified small farm anticipated by fifty years the gospel of the Southern "agrarians" of Nashville like Messrs. Ransom, Tate, Davidson, and Lytle. Though the "fire-eating" regionalism of *I'll Take My Stand* may not be found in the courteous but manly revolt of Lanier the rest of the agrarian program may be found in his writings. Lanier was not opposing "industrialism" any more than Ruskin, his contemporary, was: he vigorously opposed the exploiting of industrialism and the competitive element of capitalism. What he urged in agriculture has in great measure come to pass our problems may not be found in him because our economic system is different; but we may find in him the tone of courtesy, the imaginative sympathy and love of beauty, which are marks of the civilized and refined person.

To agreement with Dr. Knickerbocker a close examination of Lanier's essay and *I'll Take My Stand* compels us. That Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren should have revealed so unpredictable an attitude toward

Lanier—chief glory, in poetry, of the South they celebrate—is to be explained, if we grant them sincerity in their attitude, by their failure to realize that the problems of the 1930's and of the 1870's are not identical. Their excessive and defiant sectionalism drives them, though by curious, precious, and tenuous illogicality, to the conclusion that Lanier, striving to be national in the large and important sense of the word, could not have remained Southern, and that in praising nationalism he was actually praising Northern capitalistic industrialism. Lanier repeatedly pointed out the evils and dangers inherent in capitalistic industrialism. Messrs. Warren and Tate, seeing the destruction these evils have accomplished, condemn Lanier for not rejecting industrialism absolutely (though they apparently do not do so themselves)—*before the evils had proved themselves not merely inherent but potent*. As well condemn him for advocating small farming because, as Mr. John Crowe Ransom regretfully states, the small farms into which the Southern plantations were often broken after the war “have yielded less and less of a living”.

One only of the twelve contributors to *I'll Take My Stand* even so much as mentioned Lanier in his contribution to the agrarian symposium, and it is significant that he is Herman Clarence Nixon, Professor of Economics at Tulane. His essay, “Whither Southern Economy?”, contains three references to Lanier. One reference, it is true, is merely in course of quotation of Lanier's somewhat Emersonian remark that “small minds love to bring large news, and failing a load, will make one”. But Professor Nixon quotes Lanier's definition that “The New South” means small

farming with approval, at least with approval of the definition as a statement of historic fact in 1880—which is all one can properly ask that it be; and he points out that Lanier's use of the phrase, "New South", was different both from that of Henry Grady and that of W. D. Kelley, and in no wise meant an industrialized South. One feels that Professor Nixon, at least, recognizes Lanier's one ambitious excursion into the field of economic investigation as sound and conclusive, however Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren—poets *primo*, not economists—may feel about it.

So we come to the conclusion that Mr. Tate and Mr. Warren are poor critics of the social order, as being unable to recognize correct social interpretation or to hear sympathetically a social plea so nearly their own; and we re-read with new scepticism their essays on the social order, in behalf of the agrarian way, wondering if they have interpreted other matters correctly, and being less easily moved to acceptance of the conclusions they present so persuasively.

And if a body of doctrine is to be judged by its leaders, we reject, accordingly, the new Southern agrarianism, the expounders of which reject so boldly, so boastingly, the courteous, vigorous plea of a leader of a half-century ago. But agrarianism, as a way of life, is superior to and distinct from the shortcomings of any would-be exemplifiers of it, as it is superior to sectional interpretation of it. Mr. Tate calls Lanier's "a commonplace and confused mind" and his poetry "muddy, pretentious, and false". Mr. Warren calls Lanier blind, his poetry "a vulgar and naïve version" of the poetry of the earlier romantics and the contemporary Victorians. An impartial, open-minded exam-

ination of his works and his life should convince one, however, that these are harsh and unfair adjectives to apply to Lanier.

If a civilization is to be judged by its embodiment in individuals, individuals, in turn, are to be judged in respect to their appreciation—their realization and their revelation—of the civilization which nurtured them. Whatever may be said against Lanier's writings on themes not strictly patriotic (though sensitive and capable poets, like Stephen Vincent Benét and the late Robert Bridges, have spoken in praise of his poetry), his appreciations, in verse and prose, of America—"dear land of all my love"—and of Georgia—"my Georgia"—are generous, sincere, and moving, and reveal in the singer a character of tremendous appeal. They entitle him, moreover, to the respect and courteous consideration of all who love the American spirit, in its larger national manifestations, or in its narrower sectional manifestations—especially its manifestation as life settled and clarified, lived graciously in an aristocratically provincial agrarian society.

[A reply to this article, by Mr. John Crowe Ransom, follows.]